IN MEMORIAM

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Rector, St. Martin's Church

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1921 - 1951

Rector Emeritus, 1951 - 1960

THE WINDOW OF HOLY BAPTISM

Given in memory of

The Reverend Richard Hamilton Gurley

by his family and friends

The central secen of the windoW is Christ's Baptism. Jesus is shown standing in the Jordan River with arms crossed, being baptized by John the Baptist. The prophet is still clad in garments of animal skins from his stay in the wilderness. He pours the sacramental water from an escallop shell. His staff is topped by a cross lacking one cross-arm. This is his usual symbol and is known as the cross of prophecy, for at the time of his proclamation of the Saviour, Jesus had not yet been crucified. Overhead the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove.

Two additional early scenes of baptism are vignetted at the top. On the left is Philip baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch whom he had found seated in his chariot studying the prophecies of Esaias. Philip accompanied this wealthy and powerful man along the road and succeeded in converting him to Christianity so that when they arrived at a watercourse, they left the chariot together and the Ethiopian was baptized on the spot. (Acts 8:26-39).

On the right is Ananias baptizing Saul of Tarsus, Paul, after the former persecutor of Christians had been blinded on the Damascus Road. "He received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized." (Acts 9:19). Here is the true regeneration of baptism, a spiritual as well as physical seeing.

At the bottom are two small scenes which pertain to the Sacrament of Baptism more indirectly by virtue of the doctrines they illustrate. On the left Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews who came

to discourse with him at night. When Jesus stated, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," Nicodemus questioned how this could be possible. Then Jesus replied, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:3-5. See also the Service of Holy Baptism, page 275, Book of Common Prayer). Here is the germ of the meaning of baptism. We are not told whether Nicodemus, the truth-seeker, was baptized, but we may suppose he became an advocate for Christ, as there is a later account, (John 7:50-51), of him speaking out for the Master against his fellow Pharisees.

Our practice of christening young children as well as adult believers is typified by the scene on the right, Jesus surrounded by the children. For he loved and blessed them saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:16. See also Book of Common Prayer, page 274).

The small symbol at the bottom in the center refers to Christ's Great Commission to his disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19; Book of Common Prayer, page 275). The open book of the gospel to be preached is combined with the pilgrim's staff. We are thus reminded of the missionary journeys of the early apostles, as well as the multitude of journeys taken since in Christ's name.

Superimposed upon all is the escallop shell of Baptism, spilling out the triune drops representative of the Trinity in whose name we are baptized to become . . . Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto our life's end. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, page 280).

Window designed and executed by the Willet Studios of Philadelphia.